

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A data processing apparatus having connection means for being connected to a plurality of image output
5 apparatuses, comprising:

obtain means for obtaining an output form of an image;

selection means for selecting an image output apparatus, which can perform output operation in the
10 output form obtained by said obtain means, from the plurality of image output apparatuses connected by said connection means; and

job assigning means for assigning an image output job to the image output apparatus selected by said
15 selection means.

2. The data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said selection means selects an image output apparatus based on a content of the image output job in
20 addition to the output form obtained by said obtain means.

3. The data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said selection means selects an image output
25 apparatus based on the content of the image output job and a state of the image output job assigned to each of

the image output apparatuses, in addition to the output form obtained by said obtain means.

4. The data processing apparatus according to claim 1,
5 wherein said selection means comprises confirm means for
confirming function of each of the plurality of image
output apparatuses connected by said connection means,
and selects an image output apparatus having function to
perform output operation in the output form obtained by
10 said obtain means.

5. The data processing apparatus according to claim 4,
wherein said confirm means confirms the function of each
of the plurality of image output apparatuses by
15 referring to a memory storing, in advance, data
indicative of the function of each of the plurality of
image output apparatuses connected by said connection
means.

20 6. The data processing apparatus according to claim 4,
wherein said confirm means confirms the function of each
of the plurality of image output apparatuses by
communicating with each of the plurality of image output
apparatuses connected by said connection means.

25 7. The data processing apparatus according to claim 1,

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5 wherein in a case where the obtained output form designates to select an image output apparatus which completes execution of the image output job in a short time period, said selection means selects an image output apparatus which can perform output operation in the designated output form, based on the state of the image output job assigned to each of the image output apparatuses and the content of the image output job.

10 8. The data processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising display means for displaying a message regarding an execution state of the image output job assigned to each of the plurality of image output apparatuses connected by said connection means.

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20 9. The data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein in a case where the obtained output form designates to select an image output apparatus capable of color image output, said selection means confirms the function of each of the plurality of image output apparatuses connected by said connection means and selects an image output apparatus which can perform output operation in the designated output form.

25 10. The data processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein in a case where the obtained output form

designates to select a printer capable of both-sides
printing, said selection means confirms the function of
each of the plurality of image output apparatuses
connected by said connection means and selects a printer
5 serving as an image output apparatus which can perform
printing in the designated output form.

11. The data processing apparatus according to claim 1,
wherein in a case where a size of an output image is
10 designated by the output form, said selection means
confirms the function of each of the plurality of image
output apparatuses connected by said connection means
and selects an image output apparatus which can perform
output operation in the designated output form.

12. The data processing apparatus according to claim 1,
wherein in a case where there are plural image output
apparatuses which can perform output operation in the
output form obtained by said obtain means, said
20 selection means selects one of the plural image output
apparatuses based on priorities set in advance.

13. The data processing apparatus according to claim 1,
wherein in a case where there are plural image output
25 apparatuses which can perform output operation in the
output form obtained by said obtain means, said

selection means allows an operator to select one of the plural image output apparatuses.

14. The data processing apparatus according to claim 1,
5 wherein in a case where the output form obtained by said obtain means includes plural output forms, said selection means selects an image output apparatus which can perform output operation in all the output forms.

10 15. An image output system comprising the data processing apparatus disclosed in claim 1 and a plurality of image output apparatuses connected to the data processing apparatus by said connection means.

15 16. A data processing method for executing an image output job by selecting one of a plurality of image output apparatuses, comprising the steps of:

obtaining an output form of an image;

20 selecting an image output apparatus, which can perform output operation in the output form obtained in said obtaining step, from the plurality of selectable image output apparatuses; and

assigning the image output job to the image output apparatus selected in said selecting step.

25 17. The data processing method according to claim 16,

wherein in said selecting step, an image output apparatus is selected based on a content of the image output job in addition to the output form obtained in said obtaining step.

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18. The data processing method according to claim 16, wherein in said selecting step, an image output apparatus is selected based on the content of the image output job and a state of the image output job assigned to each of the image output apparatuses, in addition to the output form obtained in said obtaining step.

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19. The data processing method according to claim 16, wherein said selecting step comprises a step of confirming function of each of the plurality of selectable image output apparatuses, and an image output apparatus having function to perform output operation in the output form obtained in said obtaining step is selected.

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20. The data processing method according to claim 19, wherein in said confirming step, the function of each of the plurality of image output apparatuses is confirmed by referring to a memory storing, in advance, data indicative of the function of each of the selectable image output apparatuses.

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21. The data processing method according to claim 19,
wherein in said confirming step, the function of each of
the plurality of image output apparatuses is confirmed
by communicating with each of the selectable image
output apparatuses.

22. The data processing method according to claim 16,
wherein in a case where the obtained output form
designates to select an image output apparatus which
completes execution of the image output job in a short
time period, in said selecting step, an image output
apparatus which can perform output operation in the
designated output form is selected based on the state of
the image output job assigned to each of the image
output apparatuses and the content of the image output
job.

23. The data processing method according to claim 16,
further comprising a step of displaying a message
regarding an execution state of the image output job
assigned to each of the selectable image output
apparatuses.

24. The data processing method according to claim 16,
wherein in a case where the obtained output form

designates to select an image output apparatus capable
of color image output, in said selecting step, the
function of each of the selectable image output
apparatuses is confirmed, and an image output apparatus
5 which can perform output operation in the designated
output form is selected.

25. The data processing method according to claim 16,
wherein in a case where the obtained output form
10 designates to select a printer capable of both-sides
printing, in said selecting step, the function of each
of the selectable image output apparatuses is confirmed
and a printer serving as an image output apparatus which
can perform printing in the designated output form is
15 selected.

26. The data processing method according to claim 16,
wherein in a case where a size of an output image is
designated by the output form, in said selecting step,
20 the function of each of the selectable image output
apparatuses is confirmed and an image output apparatus
which can perform output operation in the designated
output form is selected.

25 27. The data processing method according to claim 16,
wherein in a case where there are plural image output

apparatuses which can perform output operation in the output form obtained in said obtaining step, one of the plural image output apparatuses is selected in said selecting step based on priorities set in advance.

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28. The data processing method according to claim 16, wherein in a case where there are plural image output apparatuses which can perform output operation in the output form obtained in said obtaining step, one of the plural image output apparatuses is selected in said selecting step based on an instruction inputted by an operator.

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29. The data processing method according to claim 16, wherein in a case where the output form obtained in said obtaining step includes plural output forms, an image output apparatus which can perform output operation in all the output forms is selected in said selecting step.

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30. A data processing apparatus having connection means for being connected to a plurality of image output apparatuses, comprising:

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obtain means for obtaining an output form of an image; and

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selection means for selecting an image output apparatus, which can perform output operation in the

output form obtained by said obtain means, from the plurality of image output apparatuses connected by said connection means.

- 5 31. A data processing method for executing an image output job by selecting one of a plurality of image output apparatuses, comprising the steps of:

obtaining an output form of an image; and

- 10 selecting an image output apparatus, which can perform output operation in the output form obtained in said obtaining step, from the plurality of selectable image output apparatuses.

32. A memory medium storing program codes for
15 controlling a data processing apparatus which includes connection means for being connected to a plurality of image output apparatuses, for causing the data processing apparatus to operate as an apparatus comprising:

- 20 obtain means for obtaining an output form of an image;

- selection means for selecting an image output apparatus, which can perform output operation in the output form obtained by said obtain means, from the
25 plurality of image output apparatuses connected by said connection means; and

job assigning means for assigning an image output job to the image output apparatus selected by said selection means.

- 5 33. A program for controlling a data processing apparatus having connection means for being connected to a plurality of image output apparatuses, for causing the data processing apparatus to operate as an apparatus comprising:

10 obtain means for obtaining an output form of an image;

selection means for selecting an image output apparatus, which can perform output operation in the output form obtained by said obtain means, from the
15 plurality of image output apparatuses connected by said connection means; and

job assigning means for assigning an image output job to the image output apparatus selected by said selection means.

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34. A memory medium storing program codes for controlling a data processing apparatus which includes connection means for being connected to a plurality of image output apparatuses, for causing the data
25 processing apparatus to operate as an apparatus comprising:

obtain means for obtaining an output form of an image; and

selection means for selecting an image output apparatus, which can perform output operation in the output form obtained by said obtain means, from the plurality of image output apparatuses connected by said connection means.

35. A program for controlling a data processing apparatus having connection means for being connected to a plurality of image output apparatuses, for causing the data processing apparatus to operate as an apparatus comprising:

obtain means for obtaining an output form of an image; and

selection means for selecting an image output apparatus, which can perform output operation in the output form obtained by said obtain means, from the plurality of image output apparatuses connected by said connection means.